



COVID-19: When A Student, Faculty, Or Staff Member Can Return To School

This document only applies to individuals who are out of school due to identified COVID-19 symptom(s) or close contact with a positive case. Signs and symptoms of COVID-19: fever $\geq 100^\circ$ F, new cough, shortness of breath, chills, fatigue, headache, sore throat, congestion/runny nose, muscle/body aches, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of taste or smell.

Individual	Symptomatic	No Symptoms
Alternate diagnosis determined by a medical provider (strep, influenza, etc.) AND not tested for COVID-19.	If unvaccinated, may return to school after 48 hours fever-free and note (including email and fax) from the provider stating the individual has an alternate diagnosis and/or the provider believes it's appropriate for the patient to return to school. If vaccinated, consult with school nurse.	N/A
No alternative diagnosis determined by a medical provider AND not tested for COVID-19.	If unvaccinated, must remain home for at least 10 days from the date symptoms appeared AND remain 48 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medicine and with improvement of symptoms. If vaccinated, consult with school nurse.	N/A
Tested and Negative	The individual can return to school/work if tested negative OR with a note from the provider stating the provider believes the patient to have an alternate diagnosis and it's appropriate for the patient to return to school. If the provider does not have an alternate diagnosis <i>or does not recommend</i> patient to return to school, student/staff must isolate for at least 10 days from the date symptoms appear AND remain 48 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medications and with improvement of symptoms. NOTE: GCPS will not accept negative results from an at-home kit in order to return to school.	May proceed with attending school. Exception: A known close contact (as defined by the CDC) must complete a 14-day quarantine even if test results are negative for COVID-19 <i>unless</i> the individual has been fully vaccinated and has no symptoms.
Tested and Positive	Must remain home in isolation for at least 10 days from the date symptoms appeared AND 48 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medication and improvement of symptoms.	Isolate at home for 10 days from the day the test was taken. <i>If the individual develops symptoms, then isolation time starts on day 1 of symptoms (see symptomatic tests positive.)</i>
Close Contact (per CDC definition)	Must isolate for at least 10 days from the date symptoms appear AND remain 48 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medications and with improvement of symptoms.	Quarantine for 14 days before returning to school <i>unless</i> the individual has been fully vaccinated. Must remain symptom-free. If an individual develops symptoms, then refer to the symptomatic scenarios. Anyone requesting an earlier release from quarantine must have medical documentation. The anticipated return date must also be aligned with the VDH Release from Quarantine Guidelines .

Note: *Quarantine* keeps someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others.

Isolation keeps someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others, even in their own home.